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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1.   **Cancelled.**

2.   **(Previously Amended)**   The method as claimed in claim 3 wherein the step of querying is performed by a first edge router in the network.

3.   **(Currently Amended)**   A method of establishing explicit constrained edge-to-edge paths in a one of an Internet Protocol (IP), MPLS and Optical network that uses a modified open shortest path first (OSPF) routing protocol for constraint route distribution and path computation, comprising steps of:

provisioning at least one OSPF router in the network that supports constraint path setup with traffic engineering route exchange router (TE-X) functionality to provide edge routers in the network with access to explicit constraint routes;

sending traffic engineering link state advertisement (TE-LSA) messages directly via unicast from the OSPF routers to only a nearest one of the at least one TE-X, without flooding the TE-LSAs to other routers in the network, to permit each of the at least one TE-X to maintain a traffic engineering link-state database (TE-LSDB) to compute constraint-based traffic engineering routes; and

querying the nearest one of the at least one TE-X to obtain an explicit edge-to-edge path satisfying specified traffic engineering (TE) constraints.

4.   **(Previously Amended)**   The method as claimed in claim 3 further comprising a step of discovering the nearest one of the at least one TE-X via normal OSPF Router Link-State Advertisement messages.

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5.   **(Original)**   The method as claimed in claim 4 further comprising a step of compiling and storing a list of all TE-Xs in a routing area and using the list to select a nearest TE-X based on a route cost factor associated with a shortest path route to respective TE-Xs in the list.

6.   **(Previously Amended)**   A method as claimed in claim 3 further comprising a step of discovering peer TE-Xs in the network by learning at each TE-X of other TE-Xs using normal OSPF Router Link-State Advertisement messages (Router LSAs), and storing a list of other TE-Xs discovered in the network.

7.   **(Original)**   A method as claimed in claim 6 further comprising a step of sending one of a Hello and Keep-Alive message directly via unicast to each other TE-X discovered in the network.

8.   **(Previously Amended)**   The method as claimed in claim 7 further comprising a step of sending traffic engineering link states from each of the at least one TE-X to each other TE-X discovered in the network using a bi-directional communications connection set up with each other TE-X, in order to synchronize the TE-LSDBs.

9.   **(Previously Amended)**   The method as claimed in claim 3 wherein each of the at least one TE-X advertises its capability as a TE-X using a TE-bit in an Options field of Router Link-State Advertisement (Router LSA) messages.

10.   **(Previously Amended)**   The method as claimed in claim 3 further comprising a step of sending resources reserved (RR) TE-LSAs from the TE-X directly to peer TE-Xs in the network using a bi-directional communications connection set up with each peer TE-X to advise the peer TE-Xs of resources reserved when an explicit constrained path is established.

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11.   (Previously Amended)   The method as claimed in claim 10 further comprising a step of sending a release explicit route message from an OSPF router that requested an explicit constrained path directly via unicast to the nearest TE-X, after the explicit constrained path is released, to permit the TE-X to flush RR TE LSAs related to the explicit constrained path that was released.

12.   (Previously Amended)   The method as claimed in claim 11 further comprising a step of sending resource reserved (RR) TE-LSAs from the TE-X to peer TE-Xs using a bi-directional communications connection set up with each peer TE-X in the network to permit the peer TE-Xs to flush the RR TE-LSAs related to the explicit constrained path that was released.

13.   (Previously Amended)   The method as claimed in claim 3 wherein the TE-LSAs include type, length, value (TLV) fields to define router addresses and link states.

14.   (Original)   The method as claimed in claim 13 wherein the TE-LSAs further include sub-TLV fields.

15.   (Original)   The method as claimed in claim 14 wherein the sub-TLV is a VPN sub-TLV used to indicate to other nodes in the network the VPN Identifier (VPN ID) that is associated with a router.

16.   (Original)   The method as claimed in claim 14 wherein the sub-TLV is a Replicating Capable sub-TLV used to indicate to other nodes that a router is capable of replicating data to more than one end point.

17.   (Currently Amended)   A traffic engineering route exchange router (TE-X) in a network that uses an open shortest path first (OSPF) routing protocol, comprising:

a)   a traffic engineering link-state data base (TE-LSDB) compiled using traffic engineering link-state advertisement (TE-LSA) messages received directly via unicast from OSPF routers in the network, each TE-X in the network receiving the TE-LSAs only from OSPF routers that have determined that the TE-X is a nearest one of the TE-Xs in the network and computing explicit edge-to-edge constraint-based routers through the network using the TE-LSDB ; and;

b)   a messaging system for exchanging TE-LSA messages with peer TE-Xs in the network using a bi-directional communications connection set up with each peer TE-X-; and

c)   a modified OSPF routing protocol for constraint route distribution and constraint path computation.

18.   **(Original)**   The TE-X as claimed in claim 17 wherein the TE-X is an area border router (ABR).

19.   **(Previously Amended)**   The TE-X as claimed in claim 18 wherein the ABR exchanges summary TE-LSAs with peer TE-Xs in other routing areas to provide information respecting paths across the other routing areas, and available resources associated with the paths.

20.   **(Original)**   The TE-X as claimed in claim 17 wherein on initialization the TE-X advertises its presence in the network using router link-state advertisement (Router LSA) messages.

21.   **(Previously Amended)**   The TE-X as claimed in claim 17 wherein a TE-bit is set in the Router LSA messages to advertise other routers in the network that the TE-X has traffic engineering route exchange capability.

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22. **(Original)** The TE-X as claimed in claim 17 wherein the TE-X discovers peer TE-Xs in the network.

23. **(Original)** The TE-X as claimed in claim 22 wherein the TE-X discovers peer TE-Xs in the network by exchanging normal OSPF routing information with other routers in the network and creating adjacencies with neighbors in the network.

24. **(Original)** The TE-X as claimed in claim 23 wherein the TE-X further derives and stores a list of peer TE-Xs in the network using a downloaded domain link-state database.

25. **(Previously Amended)** The TE-X as claimed in claim 24 wherein the TE-X further sends one of Hello and Keep-Alive messages directly via unicast to the other TE-Xs in the list, in order to discover a designated TE-X and a backup designated TE-X in the network.

26. **(Original)** A TE-X as claimed in claim 25 wherein the TE-X exchanges TE-LSA messages with the designated TE-X after peering with the designated TE-X, to obtain all current TE-LSAs for the network, and stores the TE-LSAs in the TE-LSDB.

27. **(Original)** A TE-X as claimed in claim 26 wherein the TE-X flushes from the TE-LSDB obsolete TE-LSAs when more current TE-LSAs are received from an OSPF router in the network, which originated the TE-LSA.

28. **(Original)** A TE-X as claimed in claim 17 wherein the TE-X:
   a) accepts queries from a first OSPF edge router for an explicit route between the first OSPF edge router and a second OSPF edge router in the network;
   b) computes the explicit route using information stored in the TE-LSDB; and

c) sends information relating to the explicit route to the first OSPF edge router.

29. **(Previously Amended)** A TE-X as claimed in claim 27 wherein the TE-X updates the TE-LSDB when the information respecting the explicit route is sent to the first OSPF edge router.

30. **(Currently Amended)** A method of reducing traffic engineering messaging loads in an OSPF network, comprising steps of:

configuring at least one OSPF router that supports constraint path setup in the OSPF network as a traffic engineering route exchange router (TE-X) to provide edge routers in the network with access to explicit constraint routes;

provisioning the at least one TE-X to advertise to other OSPF routers in the network-; and

provisioning the other OSPF routers in the network to send traffic engineering link state advertisement (TE-LSA) messages directly via unicast to only a nearest one of the at least one TE-X, and to query only the nearest one of the at least one TE-X for an explicit constraint route to an edge router in the network to obtain an explicit edge-to-edge path satisfying specified traffic engineering constraints.

31. **(Previously Amended)** The method as claimed in claim 30 further comprising a step of enabling the at least one TE-X to build a traffic engineering link-state database (TE-LSDB) using the TE-LSA messages sent directly via unicast from the OSPF routers in the network, and further enabling the TE-X to use the TE-LSDB for computing the explicit route.

32. **(Previously Amended)** The method as claimed in claim 31 further comprising a step of enabling the at least one TE-X to send copies of the TE-LSA messages directly using a bi-directional communications connection set up with each peer TE-X in the OSPF network, and to receive TE LSA messages directly

using a bi-directional communications connection set up with each peer TE-X in the OSPF network.

33. **(Original)** The method as claimed in claim 32 further comprising a step of enabling the at least one TE-X to flush outdated TE-LSAs from the TE-LSDB when a more current TE-LSA is received.

34. **(Previously Amended)** The method as claimed in claim 30 further comprising steps of:

> enabling the other OSPF routers in the network to compile a list of the at least one TE-X in the network using network routing information; and
> to select the nearest TE-X based on a least cost route of respective routes to respective ones of the at least one TE-X.

35. **(Original)** The method as claimed in claim 34 further comprising a step of enabling the other OSPF routers in the network to select a nearest TE-X by sending a probe message to the at least one TE-X in an order of least cost route until a one of the at least one TE-X acknowledges the probe message, thereby accepting to serve as nearest TE-X to the other OSPF router sending the probe message.

36. **(Previously Amended)** The method as claimed in claim 35 further comprising a step of enabling the other OSPF routers in the network to select a backup TE-X by sending a probe message to TE-Xs remaining after selecting the nearest TE-X in an order of least cost route until a one of the remaining TE-Xs acknowledges the probe message, thereby accepting to serve as backup TE-X to the other OSPF router sending the probe message.

37. **(Original)** The method as claimed in claim 30 further comprising a step of enabling the at least one TE-X to advertise to other OSPF

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routers in the network using a TE-bit in an Option field of an OSPF Router LSA
message.

38.   **(Currently Amended)**   A data network that uses an open shortest path first
(OSPF) routing protocol, comprising:

   a)   a plurality of OSPF routers, at least one of the OSPF routers that supports
         constraint path set up being provisioned to function as a traffic engineering
         route exchange router (TE X) to provide edge routers in the network with
         explicit constraint routes; and

   b)   a remainder of the routers being provisioned to send traffic engineering link-
         state advertisement (TE-LSA) messages directly via unicast to only a nearest
         one of the at least one TE-X, to enable the nearest TE-X to maintain a traffic
         engineering link-state database (TE-LSDB) for computing explicit constraint-
         based traffic engineering routes between edge routers in the data network.

39.   **(Previously Amended)**   A data network as claimed in claim 38 wherein the
nearest TE-X is further adapted to send a copy of each TE-LSA received from the
other OSPF routers in the data network directly using a bi-directional
communications connection set up with each peer TE-X in the data network.

40.   **(Previously Amended)**   A data network as claimed in claim 39 wherein the
other routers in the data network query the nearest one of the at least one TE-X to
obtain an explicit route to another router in the data network.

41.   **(Previously Amended)**   A data network as claimed in claim 38 wherein the
nearest TE-X is an area border router (ABR) in a routing area of the data network.

42.   **(Previously Amended)**   A data network as claimed in claim 38 wherein the
nearest TE-X is an autonomous system border router (ASBR) in an autonomous
system of the data network.

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43.   **(Previously Amended)**   A data network as claimed in claim 41 wherein the
ASBR peers with TE-Xs in other routing areas of the data network to which the
ASBR is connected.

44.   **(Original)**   A data network as claimed in claim 42 wherein the
ASBR peers with TE-Xs in other autonomous systems and other routing areas of
the data network to which the ASBR is connected.

45.   **(Previously Amended)**   A data network as claimed in claim 38 wherein the
data network is one of an Internet Protocol (IP), Multi-protocol Label Switched
(MPLS), and Optical network.